You are not kids anymore, you are Spartans

by Freedom Guard

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Summary: A one shot creation I made for fun prior to my HD conking out. Finished it now so hope it works. Borrowed element of John and Diana being in a relationship from my Halo Justice League story.

You are not kids anymore, you are Spartans

You are kids no more, you are Spartansâ€¦

Disclaimer: I don't own Young Justice or Halo, so stop bothering me on the detailsâ€¦

( ): Thoughts

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Author's Notes:

Yet another one shot that has been crawling in my brain for a while and driving me to distraction, thank God it's just a one shot deal then. This story is borrowing elements from Justice league Spartan Alliance but has been adapted to the Young Justice World so you can bet that some changes are there.

One such change is the fact that unlike the canon YJ version of Diana, this version of her has some of the traits of the Diana in my Justice league story, mixed in with the traits of the current one. That meaning that she and John are in a relationship which in this one is a lot more serious and close since they operate in the same city. That being New York of course, and she also happens to be friends with Cortana.

_The next difference is that I am going to include Donna Troy in the story and this should make things interesting. How will it be when the Team of Superboy, Kid Flash, Miss Martian, Wondergirl, Robin, and

Aqualad handle having the Spartan as their team leader and mentor alongside Cortana?_

Mind you, this is a one shot so there will be NO following chapters at all.

This is also made to tell the readers that I am not discontinuing ANY of my Halo stories, I am updating my other stories first and when they are updated to my satisfaction, I will update my Halo stories. So rest assured, I will be doing my best not to let my Halo writing skills get rusty. Any other concerns can be addressed to me via PM, okay?

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In the Hall of Justiceâ€¦

Superman sighed a bit as he and the other founders of the League were discussing what they were going to do with their apprentices. It had been nearly a say or so after they discovered the Cadmus facility and they were trying to find a way to make it work. So fat the young heroes were busy getting used to working with one another, but he and the other heroes knew that these young people had to deal with more dangerous things in the future, which was why they needed someone to train them.

And they all knew just who to call, only they also knew that he was not going to be too receptive of the idea.

Green Arrow spoke first on this.

"You sure he is going to agree to this? I mean I don't think sending them to him is the wisest idea."

Superman nodded a bit at that as he could understand Oliver's concerns as he had something along the same lines as well.

"I know, but so far, he is the only one suited for this line of work. I don't think we can find anyone more suited than the Chief since he's had more experience in matters like this than any of us."

Aquaman was next to speak as the king of Atlantis recalled his meeting with the Spartan.

"I will agree with Superman on this, John is by far the most qualified in these matters than most of us. After all, he had been doing theseâ€¦black ops as you call it for years."

Batman however was a bit less supportive on the matter.

"Be that as it may, having them assigned to him is not something I am too comfortable with. I respect him as the man he is, but not his methods, at least not all of them."

The others understood just what the reason was for Batman's unease with leaving the young heroes with the Master Chief who was the most unique of the League, but they knew that there was a lot for them to deal with. Cadmus's actions on cloning Superman himself was a wakeup call for them that the enemy was a lot more serious and therefore

there was no telling what else was going to surprise them. The League needed to deal with many problems, but sometimes there were some problems that were too sensitive for them to deal with and thus had to be kept out of public scrutiny. There were also problems that could have serious ramifications for the League and it's members if they were seen there and it could be used by their enemies to discredit and malign them.

In simple terms, in order to deal with such problems, the League needed a covert operations team of heroes. And the only ones who could fit the niche, were the very young heroes who had been with them for a very long time.

And who better to lead a black ops team than someone who had done black ops for a living?

And it was also Green Lantern who added his own opinion that made the idea lot more appealing.

"Besides, this can actually help give them field experience when it comes to dealing with the kinds of villains we deal with. And in time, they can be part of the League and already be experienced members when they are with us."

It was here that Diana, or better known the public as Wonder Woman spoke as she wanted to show her opinion on what they were proposing. She had two reasons for it, the first was that she and the Master Chief had been in a relationship for a long time now and it had become very close between them, so she knew that he might not like the idea of him training children regardless of their abilities, powers, origins, and skills. It would be too similar to what he had been through in his own youth and it might not sit well with him though he might understand the reasoning behind it. He did not have negative thoughts towards the Spartan II Program at all, he however would feel that doing something similar to it in this new reality that was now his home was not wise.

And the second was that her sister, Donna was going to be joining her, in Man's world. Her mother Hippolyta had made her the representative of Themyscira months before and over time, she had informed her that her sister wanted to join her. Hippolyta had said that she was not keen on having Donna leave, but she too accepted that if their people were more active in the affairs of the world then they could have more say in the long run. That was why she finally gave in and allowed Donna to go, and she also did not have much choice as only Donna had expressed interest in seeing the world of men alongside her sister.

She would have preferred to have Donna close but she also knew that being around the senior members of the League constantly would not be right. Donna was also a teenager despite her people's immortality, and as such, she had to be among those of her age. The heroes in this team were the ones closest to her age and thus the more viable choice, she only hoped that Donna would be approving of it.

"We will need to discuss this with John and Cortana, we have to give the both of them everything they need to know. I have no doubt that while he will agree to the need of it, he will not like the fact that we are doing this."

Batman turned to the Amazon and replied calmly as he could manage as he was still not comfortable with the idea.

"He'll have what he needs and so will Cortana, I don't like this more than anyone Diana, but right now we have to adapt. He knows the need for a covert team as much as anyone so we will all discuss this matter with him."

"I know, let me talk to him first, perhaps I can help ease whatever concerns he might have about this."

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In New Yorkâ€¦

John Desmond Mendez was busy running through his latest orders and he was hoping to get some free time for himself. To the people who saw him in public, he was a man who ran a small but well respected custom shop that customized vehicles as well as offered repairs and maintenance for said vehicles. But to the heroes and villains, he was the Master Chief, one of the most respected and controversial members of the League. He was respected in the sense that he had done much for the people and had saved many from dangers and threats. And controversial in the sense that he was the only League member known to use lethal force against his enemies, after all more than a handful of villains owed their deaths to him.

This was balanced out by the fact that John usually exhausted every viable option before resorting to lethal force. That and he had released some very useful technologies for the benefit of the common people from his own reality that had begun to make changes in the world. He also happened to be well liked alongside Wonder Woman by the Police Force due to his stance on not interfering with police matters unless they were dealing with situations that were beyond the normal capacity for the people to handle.

He was also one of the more secretive members of the League due to the fact that he was the only one NOT to have a statue of himself there in the Hall of Justice anywhere. He had politely asked the League not to place a statue of him there since he preferred not to be honored for doing his job, citing the creed he lived by before he came to their world all those years ago. And the League relented which was why he was usually the covert ops specialist among them.

But as soon as he got the call that he had special company coming, he placed the orders aside and got ready for the meeting. He naturally decided to wear his trademark Armor but without the helmet since the League already knew his face so no sense hiding it.

And at this moment, in his base, he was currently sitting down on a desk looking at some chatter pads while the rest of the League were there with him. Flash was sitting nearby while munching away on another dozen hotdogs and holding a large soda, J'onn was meditating and levitating at the same time, Green Lantern was busy looking over files of his own on his ring while Hawkgirl checked her mace as she joined them only to be with Green Lantern as she was the only one apart from Diana who did not have an apprentice, Green Arrow was checking his bow for errors and to keep himself busy, and Aquaman was busy looking over his base as he did not visit often. The ones with

him were obviously Diana, Superman, and Batman and he soon placed the pads down and looked at the three heroes.

"Let me see if I got this right, you want me to lead them as a team for covert work for the League?"

They nodded and he sighed, Diana was the first to talk to him about what they had proposed and he had been quite surprised by this. He was aware of the general events of the Cadmus incident but not all the details since he and Cortana were on an assignment in dealing with human traffickers in Thailand at the time.

But now that he knew what really went down, he was less then amused by the actions of the young heroes who he was now being asked to train by the others in the League. The files he had been given on them were less than convincing and he had not met them himself, but knew of them from the start. The one thing that concerned him though was the discovery of a clone of Superman.

He knew that cloning a Kryptonian was not the least bit simple and no doubt that there had to have been some form of stabilizing agent used to make it possible. The idea of people being able to clone one of his allies like this was not the least bit amusing to the man and he had little to no doubts in his mind that Superman himself was not happy with the discovery.

"You realize that apart from you, these kids have only been able to know each other for at least a day or so?"

"Yes."

"And therefore none of them have any field experience, let alone worked with a team before?"

The heroes looked at one another and their expressions were already telling John all he needed to know. He growled in annoyance at this and decided to hand the files to Cortana later. But now he glared at the heroes along with Diana as he was a man who spoke his mind.

"You've ever read Lord of The Flies? These kids you plan to foist on me remind me too much like them. They might be trained by you all, but working with a team is not obvious with them, and no, working alongside you as apprentices does not cut it. They're teenagers after all and having them in the same boat is going to be a problem unless they focus."

Batman nodded in agreement to that, apart from him and the others, Robin had no other experience with teams outside of the Wayne/Batman family. But he was not going to turn this down either, they had made a choice and while he felt that they needed more time, the actions of Cadmus dictated that time was not on their side.

"We know that, but with the bad guys stepping up their game plans, we need to do so as well."

John looked at Batman and replied with a raised eyebrow.

"So THIS is the solution?"

It was a bit more time talking between the heroes as all of them spoke to the Spartan with only Superman not mentioning too much his own stance. Apparently the idea of him taking the clone of him as part of him was still very unsettling to the Kryptonian. Something that John could understand but also find as unnecessary. Superman could chose to see the young man as a person and not as a weapon since he did have sentience. Unlike the Flash Clone that replaced him when he was young in his reality, this one sounded to be the stable kind, though at least genetically.

Once he was done talking, he asked for some privacy to think it all over. Only Diana remained with the Master Chief while the heroes waited outside.

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John looked at Diana for a moment or two before sighing in mild annoyance and speaking to the point.

"You just had to be the one to tell me about it first huh Diana?"

The dark haired woman nodded and gave her own sigh in response before she spoke seriously.

"I had to be, I knew you would have concerns about leading a team like this John, so I had to be the one to break the ice as it were first. Had it been with the others first you would have not been so receptive."

In that moment John smiled a bit and replied.

"You should know first off that just because you and I happen to be in a relationship that your mother approves of, is not going to mean Donna is going to get special treatment from me when I train her and the others in this outfit."

Diana nodded at that and was not offended in the least as she knew him, he never gave special treatment to anyone and treated everyone fairly and without bias. That was one thing that she liked about him when they worked together, even with all his years of experience he did not try to boss anyone around. He was not meek however as he would speak his mind and be ready to back up words with action, something that she also approved of as well. Their partnership was based on mutual respect, admiration, understanding, years working side by side in the field and out of it, and supporting each other, which was further enhanced by the fact that they had gotten close to one another over the years in the League. To the point that their relationship became more romantic and more personal, but despite this, it was not really a problem for the League members, since they were very capable as a duo and when working on their own missions and agendas.

In the past the idea of her being in a relationship with a man would have insulted her and made more than willing to injure the one implying it. But her time in Man's world was enough to show her that there were good men in the world apart from those with evil hearts. John was more than just her partner and friend, but someone she cared a lot about to the point of romantic interest, and the fact that he had won her mother's approval when they met added to that.

"I do not expect or want you to do that at all anyway John. It would be ill advised for you to do so anyway since it will cause friction between the team members and my sister. I want her to socialize and work with those her age, and they happen to fit the bill nicely, though I am worried about Flash's nephew, if he's anything like his uncle, you can bet that Donna would take offense."

John snorted good naturedly and replied.

"I know, I did warn Flash about that when you were part of the League before remember?"

Diana smiled a bit at the memory and then spoke to John.

"I have not forgotten that, so I have to ask you, will you do it? I know that it is asking a lot but you are the most suited. You know the risks of missions that they will undertake, and while they all have no experience, their talents should not go to waste."

"I knowâ€¦they're going to have to work for it though."

The Amazon nodded in agreement with the Spartan's statement and soon he was able to face the others just as Cortana arrived and smirked at him as she spoke.

"So we're playing coach and den mothers to a bunch of new people? Oh if Chief Mendez could see thisâ€¦"

"Cortanaâ€¦stop please."

Cortana merely smiled at that and John sighed mentally as he faced the other members of the League.

"Fine, I'll take command of this unit of your apprentices, but I have ground rules that have to be followed, not just by them, but by you as well."

"First, the very second they are with me, they are going to be under MY watch and Cortana's, so that means that they will follow MY orders. Second, I will NOT treat them as kids, the very day they took on the 'cape and cowl' they are not children anymore so they have to responsible for their actions, and that means I do not want anyone to coddle them and that includes you all. Don't tell me that they are kids if they do something wrong because if that is what you will say, then you should never have made them your apprentices in the first place. Third, I and Cortana will be training them the SAME way I was trained when I was still a trainee on Reach, this is to make sure that they are indeed ready for the life of being part of the League. Fourth, I want them to perform as if their lives depend on it so I want them to go all out the very second they are here because their lives WILL depend on it. Fifth, I expect them to be fully aware of what they are getting into because their missions from here on out will have real lives at stake, theirs and the people. "

"If these rules are followed then I will train them, if you have complaints make sure to tell me now."

The heroes already knew that John was dead serious about these things and so would Cortana, so they decided to iron all of the matters out

now than later.

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Two days laterâ€¦

"Damn itâ€¦why did we have to be given a new leader? I though we were all set for this sort of thing."

Kid Flash complained once more as he and the others were on Megan's ship, heading to the place where they all were supposed to meet their new leader. It had been a great surprise when Batman himself came and told them that Red Tornado and Black Canary were no longer going to be working with them. As they moved forward, it was then that Megan pointed to a figure ahead of them.

"Who is that?"

Robin was the ONLY one to recognize the man in armor and he quickly gulped a bit as he spoke.

"You have got to be kiddingâ€¦we have to work with HIM?!"

Megan turned to Robin and despite promising not to read anyone's mind, she could feel waves of surprise and worry coming from the protÃ©gÃ© of Batman. She had not heard of this man but it was apparent that Robin did and whoever it was, it made Robin worry.

"Who is he?"

Robin answered that question easily enough.

"That's the Master Chiefâ€¦he's the one they called the Spartan."

Donna nodded at that as she too knew who the man in armor was, after all, she had met him when he had helped battle Hades when he tried to escape.

"I know of him as well, though I have to admit, I never expected him to be our leader."

Flash had not heard of the Spartan not met the man in armor in person actually and was curious as to why only two of them knew the man. Though in hindsight, he was only asking why was it Donna knew the man.

"How do you know him exactly?"

Donna looked at Flash and replied with a shrug.

"My sister is in a relationship with him."

THAT got the attention of everyone minus Superboy himself as the others looked at the Amazon with Flash being the one to speak the most.

"Hold it! Did you just say that he is dating Wonder Woman?"

"Yes, and our mother approves of him actually. A very rare thing to hear due to our culture's views towards men in general. He earned her approval due to helping my sister on dealing with very important matters."

"Just how far are they in this relationship?"

Donna merely replied with a tone of finality to the question directed to her by Flash.

"I do not ask, it is a matter between him and my sister. All I can say is that not only is my sister happy, but my mother is pleased and that is all I can say. I do not think you need to know those details."

Flash could not help but whistle as apart from Black Canary, Wonder Woman was among the most attractive members of the Justice league though Hawkgirl was coming in at the same level. To know that the guy before them was Wonder Woman's boyfriend was something that he had not expected, though he did wonder just what was it about this Spartan that made Donna's sister actually have a relationship with him. And being who he was, he was quick to comment on it.

"Hat's off to him for being able to have a relationship with Wonder Woman then. Just how good isâ€¦"

That was when John replied even though they were still some distance off, using his MJOLNIR to amplify his voice.

"Good enough to know when to be silent...unlike you it seems."

The heroes stopped and to their surprise the Spartan faded from view, revealing that they had been looking at a hologram the whole time. Superboy turned and looked around for the man and the same was done by the others until John appeared in front of them, much to their surprise. He was still some distance away and had done this to test the young heroes if they could see him even with the Active Camouflage system he had active. The teens saw him now as he carried one of his MA5C Assault Rifles which was armed with regular rounds, several Combat Knives strapped on his armor for easy reach, and a SRS99D-S2 AM Sniper Rifle on his back, showing an imposing figure to them and soon spoke to them seriously.

"You all make so much noise that anyone with a half decent suppressed rifle and enough distance could have shot you in the dark. Now come on and let's get this going."

The others moved out and soon they were in the opening that the hologram had been in before. The Spartan turned around and sat down on a nearby boulder and looked at the assembled young heroes carefully. They did not know he was looking them over carefully to gauge them as Superboy spoke.

"So you're the Spartan...apart from the armor and gear you don't seem like much."

Aqualad turned and replied.

"Show some respect Superboy, he is now our leader after all."

John however replied to that.

"I might not be as open as Superman, but that's because I do things very differently than the others in the League. And it seems I am going to be teaching you how to operate as a team. A team for a special purpose though I have my doubts."

The Spartan soon pointed to a direction west of their current position and he spoke.

"I want to see how you all operate as a team, seven miles from here is a tower with a bell on it, and the rest of those seven miles will be loaded with traps as well as you facing me. I will be the opposing force to stop your team from ringing the bell. Your team passes if the bell is rung seven times."

Flash grinned and replied.

"That's it? This will be a piece of cake!"

The same sentiment was in the faces of the others with the exception of Kaldur, this did not escape John's notice but he decided to test Kid Flash a bit.

"Really? Then stop wasting time and get moving!"

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With the exception of Aqualad, the others charged ahead, the young Atlantean was very aware that they were going to be in for a very hard time. He took a deep breath and moved in to join the others, hoping that this situation could be salvaged somehow before they fouled things up. He was unaware that he was being evaluated by Cortana and John as they had laced a literal legion of micro-cameras in the area that they were in. And soon they were about to get a VERY good idea just how capable the Spartan was. The very first was none other than Conner who was greeted by the Spartan with a blast of weapons fire from an assault rifle. The bullets turned out to be some form of paint balls and they did not damage Conner in the slightest. The clone of Superman smirked and shouted.

"THIS THAT THE BEST YOU GOT?"

John however merely replied with pressing a switch on his weapon. Conner had no time to react as it turned out that the paint on his clothing was actually a special form of explosive gel that soon detonated with a LOUD bang. He was sent flying back from the blast as he had not been expecting the 'paint ball rounds' to be high explosive adhesive gel. He managed to dig into the ground and get up only to be greeted by more of the rounds, he moved away as best he could, and charged at the Spartan. Only for John to quickly duck and introduce a fist to Conner's face. The clone of Superman smirked and was ready to take it. The explosive stung him a bit but there was no way a direct hit could hurt him.

Or so he thought when the first connected, it unleashed over several thousand volts into him, making him scream in the way that his 'father' did when hit by Livewire.

"AAAAAUUUUUGGGGGHHHHHH!"

John followed that up with several more high powered strikes that stunned Conner and he followed the last series of punches with a powerful spinning heel kick to the head, not pulling his power as he knew that even if the kid was half human, he could take it. Even as Conner flew back, the Spartan did not let up as he tossed two Sonic Grenades that soon were beside Conner and those detonated. This combined with the assault of the same explosive adhesive gel bullets finally put Superboy down and out as John soon secured him with special shock bracers, and directed his attention to the rest of the young team.

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Kid Flash was on the move when he spotted an obstacle course and smirked as he moved quickly through the place, unaware that John had set the traps in accordance with the speed Wally had. After all, he had worked with the Flash a number of times and had an idea on how fast he could go without being consumed by the Speed Force. The first set of traps included bouncing Betty style mines that unleashed three times the number of TTRs into the air, the young Hero managed to avoid those along with a number of swinging wooden poles. He smirked once more and replied to himself.

"This is too easy!"

Unfortunately that train of thought was broken as several missiles were fired at his direction, those caught him off guard as he tried to evade them, but more of the mines began to explode around him, unleashing a veritable hailstorm of TTRs. he managed to dodge many of them but the missiles suddenly unleashed smaller but faster versions of themselves while the bodies climbed up and unleashed a hail of gas into the area. The smaller missiles soon detonated unleashing a large amount of explosions, non lethal to be sure, but enough to send Kid Flash to the ground. He got up and ran once more, but only got within several feet as John appeared through the smoke and was now very close to Kid Flash. In this situation, the young speedster could not react in time as John smashed him with a rifle butt to the stomach, the young man groaned out in pain and that was followed by a chop to the back of the head to send him to unconsciousness.

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The next to fall was Donna herself as she moved over the tree tops, she knew that she was being followed Megan and she was happy for that. She was not sure about working alongside men yet, and the actions of the one called Kid Flash left a taste in her mouth, and she wanted to prove that she was more than able to hold her own. And of course she wanted to prove that she was more than able to match her sister's achievements as well as show to her sister's 'boyfriend' that she was more than able to take care of herself and did not need to be coddled. As she moved over the tree tops, she was caught off guard as bolts of energy came at her. She dodged several of the beams and moved to block the rest but John was expecting that as he moved through the cover of the trees, and actually revealed himself to Donna to see just what was Donna's course of action, along with the fact that Robin was nearby.

Instead of enlisting the aid of Batman's protege, she ignored her team mate and went after him herself, John was none too pleased with

that course of action and responded in kind as he lured Donna into the traps he had set up, all custom tailored for her. After all he had seen her fight back on the island of the Amazons and had seen her spar with Diana. And he knew that unlike her older sister, Donna had never been to the outside world so she was not familiar with how things have changed. Diana might be their ambassador but that did not mean that she knew everything either and John was now using his Black Ops training to even up the odds against Donna.

The younger Amazon had no time to react as in her haste to get past the Spartan, she had triggered a laser alarm that was tailored by John and Cortana to match her speed. The very second she was in the kill zone as it were, all hell broke loose around her. She had to block multiple shots from all directions ranging from hard rubber bullets, metal ones, and then low powered lasers. She did well enough on the first wave, but they soon came on all sides and forced the young Amazon to really work on her defenses. This however made her lose focus and the next attack was now a cone like blast underneath her as TTRs filled with a special dosage of anesthetic smashed into her. She soon felt her lower body and upper torso go numb and as she hit, the ground she fell unconscious.

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John turned and quickly fired some rounds as Robin moved in to strike him from behind, his Assault Rifle barked out several bullets to shoot down the robin shaped throwing weapons. The Spartan quickly used the butt of his weapon to move aside Robin's kick aimed at his helmet and tossed the young apprentice of Batman aside. The Spartan placed aside his Assault Rifle as Robin took out his collapsible bo staff, tossing out more of his throwing weapons at the Master Chief. John however dodged the weapons and grabbed one, tossing it back at the Boy Wonder forcing Robin to deploy his staff prematurely. John quickly took out his Combat Knives and engaged Robin who was forced to block a number of attacks from the Spartan. This went on for a while but John wanted it this way.

He dodged an incoming kick to his head and grabbed the extended leg and tossed the young man to a nearby tree and quickly tossed his Combat Knives at Robin. One Knife dug deeply into the left shoulder of the young hero, not drawing blood but impaling him to the tree, the second did the same as it dug deeply on the right side of Robin's torso. The young man was thankful that his suit's inner weave of Kevlar helped, but was still shocked at the fact that the Knives tore into the Kevlar in the first place!

Any other thought he had died off as John quickly tossed a grenade that exploded to release a good deal of non toxic anesthetic into Robin's area, and the young man soon passed out.

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Megan was moving towards the objective but soon spotted none other than Superboy and instead of looking around to make sure that she was not walking into a trap, she rushed to the unconscious Kryptonian's side. She was not aware that John was nearby and was using a special electronic shield that was made to counter the actions of Martian Telepathy, something that John personally developed when sparring with J'onn. This telepathic shield was the key to allow him to ambush Megan. The ambush was sprung the very second she turned over the body

of the still out cold half Kryptonian and out came a pair of Flashbang Grenades that already had their pins pulled, she barely had time to react as she was blinded and deafened by the weapons, and before she could react, John was able to strike her with a few precise shots on her legs, before tossing a gas grenade at her. The gas was knockout gas, but tailored for Megan's biology and soon she was out of it.

John sighed a bit at the performance of the team and turned as he quickly aimed his weapon at none other than Kaldur, he was not disappointed as the young Atlantean attacked with his water bearers, shaped like whips. They closed the gap and began to fight as John moved to his Combat Knife as using his gun in this range would not be wise. They traded blows as Kaldur switched to using blades of water. John however was able to evade the blows and then lashed out with blows of his own, and they were precise and very swift, forcing Kaldur to go back on the defensive. John soon leaped over the young man and before Kaldur could turn to attack, he ducked and landed a powerful thrust kick into the man's chest.

"OOF!"

Before Kaldur could recover, John was upon him and landed several key blows, pulling back some of his strength to avoid harming the young man. Kaldur gave a good account of himself despite sporting some major bruises but he was hard pressed to launch a counter offensive. John however finished his blows by tossing the young man over and then landing a blow to the back of the head, sending the young man down for the count. John got up and looked at the heroes and snorted.

"We haven't even gotten to lunch time."

...

Lunch timeâ€¦

The heroes found themselves awake and aching after running through the ten mile course filled with traps and dangers, they shook their heads and groaned even more as their bodies screamed in protest in trying to move. They soon looked to see that the Spartan was right there before them holding his MA5C Assault Rifle in one hand, his SRS99D AM S2 Sniper Rifle leaning on a nearby log, and his M6C SOCOM pistols on his sides while another Combat Knife was on the shoulder holster. The man had taken off his helmet and was glaring at them coldly until Aqualad spoke next to them, he was not fully tied up but he too had bruises and cuts as he looked at them with a sad expression on his face.

"We failed the courseâ€¦"

Megan spoke next.

"You meanâ€¦none of us made it?"

The Atlantean youth shook his head and the expressions on the heroes' faces made it clear that this was a blow to them. John however was not the least bit sympathetic as he spoke.

"Correct, not a single one of you passed this course, I don't know

what possessed the others in the League to see potential in you, but I might as well tell them their thoughts were misplaced. If this is the kind of potential you all have, I will not waste my time, only to say that you should quit being heroes."

"SHUT UP!"

Superboy had enough of the Spartan and charged at the man, intent on smashing his face in, but before the others could react, or warn Superboy not to attack the senior League member John countered. He quickly moved forward, avoiding the blow and quickly used a fluid Judo thrown to send Superboy to the ground. As soon as he landed hard on the ground, the Spartan twisted his outstretched arm and quickly was on top of the Kryptonian youth. He took out another Combat Knife, only this one had a green blade on it, he placed it next to Superboy's throat and his M6C SOCOM was now behind the teen's head.

All of which took mere seconds to the shock of the young heroes as John spoke calmly.

"This Knife happens to have Kryptonite crystals on the blade to not only drain your powers, but cut your throat open, and the pistol in my hands is loaded with specially tipped Kryptonite bullets filled with liquid Kryptonite. All of which can kill you quite easily right now."

Superboy sensed his powers leaving him and for the first time, he felt fear as he turned to see the Spartan looking back him.

"You think I do not know how to fight someone like you? I studied Superman's strengths and weaknesses to know how to face a Kryptonian who might be an enemy. That in turn means I know your weaknesses as well, you might not be a full Kryptonian but these will work just as well on you."

John then spoke in a cold tone to the two female members of the team.

"Wondergirl, I want you to break Robin's legs and then choke Aqualad with your lasso. Miss Martian, I want you to telepathically render Kid Flash into a vegetative state and do the same to Wondergirl once she is done with both Robin and Aqualad then I want you to do the same to yourself. If the both of you don't do it right now, I cut Superboy's throat open and then shoot him in the head."

This stunned the two female members of the team and had the others utterly silent as the Spartan said it in a neutral tone, but in such a way that it was difficult for them to tell if he was being serious or joking with them.

"This is not funny."

Kid Flash said, all traces of his humor gone.

John merely snorted and replied.

"Fighting a determined and ruthless foe usually is. That is the kind of foe you will all be fighting soon."

John got up and placed away the knife and the pistol as that told them that he was now going to let them relax but he was not done with them yet as he spoke once more.

"If you plan to be in the League one day, there's a lot you need to learn. The first and most important is that you will not be dealing with people who wave guns around like idiots and act tough. You will be dealing with the kinds of people, meta-human, supernatural, alien, and more who will not hesitate to do anything they can to accomplish their goals. If it includes bombing a civilian area, poisoning the city's water supply, kidnapping innocent people, use hostages, commit murder, and using illegal weapons and technology, they will do it."

"Being a hero is not a popularity contest, nor is it to gain fame, recognition, and all those useless things. Being a hero is to protect the people and ensure that they do not have to live in fear without us becoming tyrants ourselves. In doing so, you have to be ready to risk your lives to help them and your team. That is the kind of commitment the League needs to protect people, and therefore that is the kind of commitment you need, the kind your team needs, and the kind the people need from you. And as far as I have seen, you all have none of it."

John then decided to drop the bomb-shell on them.

"Besides, even if one of you did ring the bell seven times, you all still failed the test. I merely let you go through with it to drive home the point."

That got a reaction as all of the young heroes looked at the Spartan who did not even bat an eyelash at their reactions. Privately though, the Spartan could not help but be somewhat amused by their reactions and Donna was the first to speak.

"But that is unfair! Why then do we have to ring the bell seven times if we were going to fail?"

John replied to that neutrally.

"Think back on what I said before you all decided to charge ahead into the course like a pack of idiots. There you'll find the answer."

The heroes did not know what he was driving at first, but it was here that Megan finally recalled what the Spartan had said earlier before she and the others took off.

"You said that your team had to ring the bell seven times."

The Spartan nodded in agreement to the Martian's statement and gave his comment.

"When I said that, it means that you ALL as a TEAM have to be on that tower and ring that bell together seven times. There is no room for showboats on my course, if your team loses, then without question, you lose. You DO NOT win until your TEAM wins. This whole purpose of ringing the bell on that tower while going through a trap filled stretch of land seven miles worth was about team work, how to complement your team members' strengths and offset their

weaknesses."

John then gave a dark glare at the six heroes, showing his obvious displeasure at what they had done earlier.

"But no, you all charged ahead without taking the moment to understand the objective of the mission and work as one. You failed the objective to gather intelligence, find loop holes and plan accordingly. You failed to work as a team, you failed to establish proper communications with one another, you failed to support one another, and you failed to help one another when the other member was under attack. So one by one the traps, Cortana, and myself picked you off. Had this been a REAL life or death struggle, all of you would have been dead."

He glared at Robin and Dick could not help but gulp at the way John was glaring at him, sure he was used to glares from Bruce, but the Spartan was different.

"You thought this was your chance to go into the big league and lead this team since you trained with Batman, you might have been better prepared and skilled than some of them, I will give you that much Robin. But after what I have seen and what I have learned about your desire to be in the lead, I would not even trust you to clean latrines with your own toothbrush and spit. You may have the training, physical and mental abilities, but the pride and arrogance you have in being trained by Batman is an easy way to get injured or dead. It takes only ONE instance to send you to the hospital or in a pine box Robin."

He then directed his glare as Superboy.

"You charged at me thinking that hitting me like a berserk Brute was going to work, you rely merely on charging in and using your fists to beat your foes. Granted being Kryptonian gives you endurance and strength, but you took no advantage of your other abilities. And the real nail in YOUR coffin on this mission, you did not even consider the fact that I might KNOW how to fight a Kryptonian having been working with Superman for years. You're enemies are NOT born stupid Superboy so don't act like you are stupid yourself. Use your speed, your agility, your powers, above all, use your brain. You have intellect so use it as well, don't waste it."

Next he directed his attention at Kid Flash.

"You think speed is the only thing you need to best the bad guys and the training I plan to give you? Compared to your uncle you are not yet at the level needed to be anywhere near League material. And no matter how fast you are, if you cannot be as fast with your mind and reaction time, you might as well be standing still and have a massive target board on your chest. You did not take into account the fact that I already know your abilities and planned accordingly for it. Just like Superboy, you charge ahead without thinking and rely on speed alone, not on your wits, skills, and training, which I can already see you have very little. Your enemies are NOT stupid so neither should you be. And of course your attitudes towards women is an easy way to wind up getting in trouble, focus on the job first and foremost, because if you decide to flirt with every woman you meet, you are either going to get slapped or beaten, or get sent into an early grave. "

He then looked at Donna.

"You might have left Themyscira to see the world of men alongside your sister, but you do not have full trust towards the men you are now with and no doubt Kid Flash's actions only serve to make things less than helpful. That is why you decided to go on your own and deal with my course yourself, to prove you are more than what you seem. That course of action and that kind of mindset might be commendable in some areas, but not in mine Wondergirl. In battle the enemy doesn't care about gender or appearance, all they care about is doing what they can and take out anyone in their path. That is why you have to focus on working alongside your team regardless of gender since through that, you can learn much and accomplish even more. You did not do that and that to me is disappointing."

Next on the lock was Aqualad.

"You managed to recognize early on that you all where going to be in a situation that demanded team work, and you remained calm and level headed, for that you are to be commended. But you should know that the enemy is not going to sit back and take a break while you contemplate things. Lives are at stake and if you want to lead a team, you have to also be ready to take decisive and direct action, along with ensuring that the team is focused and aware of the task at hand. You did none of that and you allowed the rest of them to go rushing off instead of telling them seriously to be careful and work as one. You CANNOT afford to hesitate when lives are on the line and there is no turning back, you have to make due with what you have and what you can work with. If you cannot show initiative, leadership, focus, and the willingness to act decisively in a critical moment, then you fail the team, yourself, and the others who are in danger. Balance words with action at critical moments, or it will cost you, just as it cost you your chance today."

He directed his attention last to Miss Martian.

"You flew in and did not expect that I would use your own team mates as booby traps to lure you in and take you out, apart from the traps that I conditioned for you in particular. You should never go into anything without expecting the unexpected. Your enemies are not going to tell you what they are going to do just because you act nice and friendly before them. That is a naÃ¯ve way of thinking and that can get you or your friends killed before you all can even react. Had I not used knockout gas on you, you would have died since I also know the limitations of the Martian form since I worked with your uncle for years."

John let the group think hard of their actions for a minute or two before he spoke again.

"Pack your bags and get out of here, you failed this team course so I will not waste my time."

â€¦

But apparently the heroes were not too keen on just walking away. They had come too far to turn back now. Aqualad was the one to speak first to the Spartan as he moved to face the man.

"Give us another chance sir. I know we have disappointed you but we want to prove that we have what it takes to be heroes."

John looked at the young heroes and silently placed on his helmet and then stood up as he spoke.

"So you all want a second chance? All right, I'll give you a second chance, but be prepared for what I have in mind."

The serious tone in the Spartan's voice soon filled the teen heroes with dread along with removing their smiles as they soon followed the Spartan as he got his weapons and headed away from the tower and into another ridge, they climbed in and soon they spotted a massive field before them. The Spartan turned to them and spoke as he pointed to a high mountain that was ahead of them through a massive forest, several valleys and some hilly areas.

"On that mountain is another tower with a bell on top of it. The objective is the same as before, only this time. The tower is at least thirty miles away from here and twice as filled with traps. You all have seven days to get to that tower and ring that bell, and this time, it WILL be done as a team. You all WILL ring that bell as a TEAM seven times, and you WILL NOT leave ANYONE BEHIND. The thirty miles will have three times the traps I have placed in your previous test, and therefore, do not expect this hike to be the least bit easy. And to make things interesting even more, I will not be the only foe you will be facing."

Cortana took that as her cue as she re-appeared in John's open left palm and as soon as she was in human size, she gave a wave to the nearby area and out from the skies came several Pelican Drop-ships and as soon as the ships came closer, it became obvious to the young heroes that cargo. There were Scorpion Tanks, Warthogs that were of the three types, the ones with the machine guns, the gauss cannons, and the ones with missile launchers. Once the vehicles were released, the Pelicans unloaded at least several large groups of soldiers, armed with a mix of weapons and wearing different types of armor.

Before the heroes were at least three dozen UNSC vehicles and over fifty armed and armored soldiers. Cortana turned and spoke to the heroes with a very amused look at their stunned expressions.

"These soldiers are not human, but are all specially made cyborg constructs that have been made specially by me and have been imprinted with the same thought patterns of my personal caveman here to allow them to move and fight like the Master Chief. Therefore you don't have to worry about harming any of them, but they are programmed to have strength that is at a level lower than Wonder Woman herself. They also happen to be under my command and like my long time partner, I too happen to have read your files and therefore I know your weak points as well, so do not expect me to be nice."

That made the heroes pale even more, and Megan herself gulped at the implications of that statement. John studied them carefully and then spoke to them carefully as well. This was make or break time, if they failed in this starting line, then he was going to send them packing no matter what they said or did.

"If you do not have what it takes to do this, then you turn around, get up that tower behind you, and ring the bell once. Do that and you are out and therefore you can consider yourself no longer part of the team. If you cannot commit to the risk of being a hero, then you do not belong here and cannot be heroes. "

That got them to focus and none of them did that and Aqualad spoke seriously.

"No sir, we will take this challenge."

The same could be seen in the faces of the young heroes, they had failed their first test and this was their last chance. They all knew that and they were not going to foul this up, they had not come this far to turn back now. All of them spoke at that instant as Kid Flash was the first to speak.

"I am not going to quit!"

"I will do my best to pass this test with my friends!"

"I will not turn back, I came here to help my sister and I will!"

"I am not going to let this stop me!"

"I am not going to let you or anything stop me from proving myself!"

John merely shrugged and replied sternly.

"Acta no Verba."

The others were confused briefly until Robin recalled what that meant.

"Action, not words."

"Correct, nowâ€¦GET MOVING!"

â€¦

Seven days laterâ€¦

The heroes were all worn out as they all managed to make it to the top of the tower, but not without marks to show for their hard work. The costumes that the others wore were torn and ripped as well as covered in dirt, grime, and soil. They also looked like they had been fighting just about every member of the Justice League and the Injustice Gang. Behind them the thirty mile long course was a mess. There were burning vehicles there and bodies as well, thankfully all of those units were machines and all controlled by Cortana herself, with the Chief leading point. The heroes now had an idea on just what the man in armor and the female A.I had in store for them in the near future and when they all rang the bell seven timesâ€¦nothing felt more potent to them than to hear the ringing of the bell. As they went down, John appeared and once more he took his helmet off and was looking at them intently.

They did not say anything to the man as he was silently sizing them up, they knew better than to try and antagonize the man who was

training them. John did not say anything yet for another minute or two, but he did speak eventually.

"Not bad, you finally got the message. Head down to valley to the east, there's already a mess tent with food and drink waiting for you. After that, you all have ten minutes to rest, we'll break down the tent and head off to the base in one of the Pelicans and begin training."

Aqualad spoke next.

"Training sir?"

"Yes, what you went through is merely the warm up."

"HUH?"

All of the young heroes looked at the man as if he had grown another head but John did not mind as he methodically reloaded his weapons and then spoke.

"Just because you passed my test does not mean that this is it. I am going to train you all the way I was trained. Make no mistake; my training will be hard, demanding, and at times ruthless. But that level of training may very well mean the difference between you all coming back home alive and safe, or worse. Now get to the tent and eat up, we've got to get to the base, train until the end of the day, and you will have some sleep and dinner."

Robin was about to comment when John spoke sternly.

"You got a problem Bird Boy?"

"No...sir."

John got in front of Robin and spoke once more.

"I cannot hear you, louder!"

"No sir!"

"Again!"

"NO SIR!"

"Better, now get to it!"

â€¦

To be continuedâ€¦

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Author's Notes:

There, this is done and done, and keep in mind that since this is a mere one shot story, there will not be any new chapters for this and it will stay that way. So don't bother asking me for updates because there will not be any.

End
file.